



Town of Arlington, Massachusetts
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Minutes 01/10/2012

Tri-Community Working Group Meeting Minutes -- 1/10/2012

The Tuesday, January 10, 2012 meeting of the Tri-Community Working Group for Flooding Issues was held at 6:00 pm, in the second-floor meeting room of Arlington Town Hall.

Attending:

Wayne Chouinard
Catherine Daly-Woodbury
Elsie C. Fiore
Stephen Kaiser
Martha Moore
Owen O'Riordan
Michael Rademacher
Stephen Revilak
Clarissa Rowe
Anne Thompson

Approval of November 8th Meeting Minutes

The November 8, 2011 meeting minutes were approved.

Status of Discovery Park CLOMR and Faces Construction

The Discovery Park Conditional Letter of Map Revision (CLOMR) is supposed to give communities the opportunity to comment on the impact of flood elevation changes. Arlington was asked to sign a form stating compliance with the town's flood management plan. This issue was never brought before the Arlington Conservation Commission. The project developers had communications with the Arlington Conservation Commission, to determine whether a meeting would be required; no meeting ever came out of these discussions.

Permits for the Discovery Park projects were issued prior to ratification of the most recent FEMA maps. The CLOMR process had been under way for the past two years. Cambridge received a CLOMR. FEMA is ready to affirm compliance with their regulations, but they need signatures from communities to finalize this affirmation.

Mike Rademacher stated that Arlington was asked about the Arthur D. Little demolition work taking place in Arlington. Now, the town is being asked to give sign off, stating that the project meets community flood plain requirements.

Owen O'Riordan noted that a floodway is where water flows to BFE (base flood elevation) during a 100-year storm. The floodway is a synthetic construct. If you build in a floodway, you must show that you are not changing the base flood elevation.

Steve Kaiser noted that when FEMA revised their maps, they reduced the BFE by approximately eight inches, but increased the area of the floodway.

The Discovery Park construction contains plans for five buildings plus one garage. There is a second set of plans

for 1--2 buildings, plus another garage.

Mike Rademacher questioned why the town of Arlington was being asked for sign-off. The town had no involvement prior to the sign-off request. Why wasn't the Conservation Commission involved? Mr. Rademacher is trying to get consultants and the Conservation Commission together.

Arlington never received a CLOMR for the Faces construction. None of the construction is taking place within Arlington, but Arlington is hydraulically connected to the construction site. Homeowners might be notified if the Faces construction changed the base flood elevation. However, feedback would not be sought from the town of Arlington.

Workers have started to drive piles at the Faces construction site. This is at-risk work, which has not yet been permitted.

North System Hydraulic Study

Steve Kaiser asked if there will be peer review of the North System hydraulic study.

Mike Rademacher wasn't sure if there would be peer review. Arlington will be very interested in the results of this study, because of its potential impact on town sewer systems. We can ask MWRA about peer review.

The group decided to place this topic on the agenda for the next meeting.

Leadership Transition In April

Clarissa Rowe is not planning to run for re-election, so this working group will need to find a new leader. The new leader must be an elected official or city manager.

New Business

Stormwater Awareness. In April, Arlington Town Engineer Wayne Chouinard will start holding stormwater awareness meetings. Discussion topics will include rainwater harvesting, rain gardens, stormwater handling, permeable pavement, and how stormwater runoff affects residents and the town as a whole. These meetings will be held every other month, alternating with Tri-Community meetings.

Stormwater siltation and dredging. Alewife Brook bridges are becoming filled with silt. Later in the year, we should discuss the consequences of silt-laden stormwater runoff. Arlington may propose warrant articles to expand requirements of stormwater bylaws. Arlington hasn't had problems with construction runoff, but other communities (e.g., Belmont) have. There are plans for large construction projects in Arlington, such as the Symmes site.

Garballey Legislation. During the Nov 8th meeting, we discussed a piece of legislation proposed by Representative Garballey. The legislation, H.2572, proposed funding to study flood storage and water quality improvements in the Alewife Brook watershed. This legislation assumed that the town of Belmont would build on specific parcels of land, but it appears that development will not take place.

Benefit for the Silver Maple Forest. Clarissa Rowe distributed a flyer for a "Save the Silver Maple Forest" benefit. The benefit will be held on Feb. 4th, 2012 at the First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church in Arlington.

Meeting adjourned at 6:39 pm.